

Traditional and Non-traditional Cultural Values	
Traditional	Non-Traditional
Collectivism and group well-being, with close family ties.	Individualism and loose family ties
Cooperation	Competition
More friendliness	More rivalry
Most information is physical and hidden (spoken and body language)	Most information is coded in words (written language)
Religious beliefs entrenched and unquestioned	Religious beliefs are questioned
Time is a continuum (do several things at once for as long as it takes)	Time is compartmentalized: schedule appointments and tasks for specific periods
Orientation is the present	Orientation is the future
Work motivated by need	Work motivated by ambition
More spiritualism	More materialism
More patience	Impatient for change or action
May say one thing and mean something else	Straightforward
Saving face is important	Decisions made on the basis of efficiency
Decision-making is personal	Decision-making is impersonal

The Rise of Non-traditional Values

In the private sector, the rationalization of industry has broken up traditional lines of supply. Sellers can no longer count on business just because they have a cozy relationship with friends in other companies or in key government positions. The influx of foreign competition has forced buyers to place efficiency ahead of other purchase criteria. This focus on performance has reduced corruption. Privatization of many firms has also reduced opportunities for corruption. Pressure from an increasingly sophisticated middle class and foreign business has reinforced this trend.

The decline of "connections" as the major factor driving sales does not mean that prospective Mexican partners will not claim to have close relationships with people in power. Although these claims may be true, their influence on sales is frequently exaggerated. A highly placed political contact is always helpful, at least to get a foot in the door. Contacts can also help to build strategic alliances with other companies. But as Mexico's corporate and political cultures mature, this element is becoming less and less important in making sales.

In general, Canadian businesses have found that local firms with less-traditional business styles make better partners. Their executives tend to use less hierarchical decision-making processes. They are generally better educated and may have attended foreign universities. And they are more likely to have a global outlook and an understanding of international business ethics.